

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of determining when to update software of a client device
2 comprising:

3 receiving client activity data from the client device; and
4 updating software resident on the client device when the client activity
5 data indicates activity less than a predetermined threshold for a selected period
6 of time.

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1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the client activity data comprises
2 information describing at least one of reception of content and consumption of
3 content by the client device.

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1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the content comprises audio-visual
2 content received over at least one of a broadcast network and a multicast
3 network and content consumption comprises rendering the audio-visual content
4 for perception by a user.

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1 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising maintaining a billing
2 database for the client device using the client activity data.

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1 5. The method of claim 2, wherein the content is encrypted and the client
2 activity data comprises information describing operations performed by the client
3 device to decrypt the received content prior to consumption of the content by the
4 client device.

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1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the software resident on the client
2 device comprises tamper resistant software.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the updated client device software
2 comprises at least one of a new cryptographic key, a new cryptographic
3 technique, a new tamper resistant technique, and a new software configuration.

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1 8. An article comprising: a storage medium having a plurality of machine
2 accessible instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by a
3 processor, the instructions provide for determining when to update software of a
4 client device by receiving client activity data from the client device; and updating
5 software resident on the client device when the client activity data indicates
6 activity less than a predetermined threshold for a selected period of time.

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1 9. The article of claim 8, wherein the client activity data comprises
2 information describing at least one of reception of content and consumption of
3 content by the client device.

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1 10. The article of claim 9, wherein the content comprises audio-visual
2 content received over at least one of a broadcast network and a multicast
3 network and content consumption comprises rendering the audio-visual content
4 for perception by a user.

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1 11. The article of claim 8, further comprising instructions for maintaining a
2 billing database for the client device using the client activity data.

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1 12. The article of claim 9, wherein the content is encrypted and the client
2 activity data comprises information describing operations performed by the client
3 device to decrypt the received content prior to consumption of the content by the
4 client device.

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1 13. A method of determining when to update content reception and
2 consumption software of client devices in a client/server system comprising:

3 receiving client activity data from a plurality of client devices, the client
4 activity data comprising information describing at least one of reception of
5 content and consumption of content by each client device;
6 maintaining a billing database for the client devices using the received
7 client activity data;
8 marking a client device in the billing database as eligible for receiving
9 updated content reception and consumption software when client activity data for
10 the client device indicates activity less than a predetermined threshold for a
11 selected period of time; and
12 downloading the updated software to the marked client device for
13 subsequent use in receiving and consuming content.

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1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the content is encrypted and the
2 client activity data comprises information describing operations performed by the
3 content reception and consumption software of the client device to decrypt the
4 received content prior to consumption of the content by the client device.

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1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the content reception and
2 consumption software resident on the client device comprises tamper resistant
3 software.

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1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the updated content reception and
2 consumption software comprises at least one of a new cryptographic key, a new
3 cryptographic technique, a new tamper resistant technique, and a new software
4 configuration.

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1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the content comprises at least one of
2 a motion picture and a television program.

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1 18. An article comprising: a storage medium having a plurality of
2 machine accessible instructions, wherein when the instructions are executed by

3 a processor, the instructions provide for determining when to update content
4 reception and consumption software of client devices in a client/server system by
5 receiving client activity data from a plurality of client devices, the client activity
6 data comprising information describing at least one of reception of content and
7 consumption of content by each client device, maintaining a billing database for
8 the client devices using the received client activity data, marking a client device
9 in the billing database as eligible for receiving updated content reception and
10 consumption software when client activity data for the client device indicates
11 activity less than a predetermined threshold for a selected period of time, and
12 downloading the updated software to the marked client device for subsequent
13 use in receiving and consuming content.

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1 19. The article of claim 18, wherein the content is encrypted and the
2 client activity data comprises information describing operations performed by the
3 content reception and consumption software of the client device to decrypt the
4 received content prior to consumption of the content by the client device.

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1 20. The article of claim 19, wherein the content comprises at least one of
2 a motion picture and a television program.

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1 21. A server in a content distribution system comprising:
2 a billing database to store client activity data received from a plurality of
3 client devices, the client activity data comprising information describing at least
4 one of reception of content and consumption of content by each client device;
5 a client software update database to store versions of updateable content
6 reception and consumption software; and
7 a client software manager configured to receive client activity data from
8 the client devices, to update the billing database using the received client activity
9 data, to mark a client device in the billing database as eligible for receiving
10 updated content reception and consumption software when client activity data for
11 the client device indicates activity less than a predetermined threshold for a

12 selected period of time, and to download a version of the updateable content
13 reception and consumption software to each marked client device for
14 subsequent use in receiving and consuming content.

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1 22. The system of claim 21, wherein the updateable content reception
2 and consumption software comprises tamper resistant software.

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1 23. The system of claim 21, wherein the updated content reception and
2 consumption software comprises at least one of a new cryptographic key, a new
3 cryptographic technique, a new tamper resistant technique, and a new software
4 configuration.

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